

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 6, 2003

**Senate Joint Resolution**

**No. 3**

**Introduced by Senators Alarcon and Romero**  
**(Coauthors: Senators Kuehl, Soto, and Vasconcellos)**  
*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Cohn, Diaz, Dymally, Kehoe,*  
*Koretz, Lieber, Montanez, Mullin, and Yee)*

January 8, 2003

Senate Joint Resolution No. 3—Relative to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 3, as amended, Alarcon. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

This measure would, among other things, urge the Congress of the United States to increase TANF block grant funding to certain states, allow states, ~~until January 1, 2005,~~ to use TANF funds *to provide an additional 24 months of TANF eligibility* for ~~eligible~~ families who have used 60 months of TANF eligibility, and consider “stopping the clock” on TANF assistance for recipients who are meeting work participation requirements or live in counties with high unemployment rates.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, In 1996, the federal government restructured the
- 2 nation’s safety net for poor families, replacing the Aid to Families
- 3 with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with the Temporary
- 4 Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program in an
- 5 attempt to better transition families toward self-reliance; and
- 6 WHEREAS, The new welfare law imposed a 60-month time
- 7 limit on the receipt of federally funded cash assistance, allowing

1 only 20 percent of a state's cases to be exempted for "hardship"  
2 reasons; and

3 WHEREAS, In response to the 1996 federal changes, California  
4 enacted the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to  
5 Kids (CalWORKs) program in 1997, which limits adults, but not  
6 children, to 60 cumulative months of cash assistance, with  
7 designated exceptions for those unable to work; and

8 WHEREAS, As many as 50,000 recipients were expected to  
9 reach the CalWORKs five-year limit on January 1, 2003, with  
10 more recipients expected to reach the limit throughout 2003 and  
11 beyond; and

12 WHEREAS, Working parents, most in low-paying jobs with  
13 few opportunities for self-sufficiency, make up a majority of those  
14 who will reach the time limit; and

15 WHEREAS, In many counties, a majority or near majority of  
16 parents reaching the time limit are married as well as working,  
17 contradicting the stereotypes of idle single parents that underlay  
18 the creation of time limits; and

19 WHEREAS, The termination of cash assistance will increase  
20 hardships for families, including hunger and the inability to meet  
21 housing costs; and

22 WHEREAS, The deepening economic crisis reflected in the  
23 decline in the stock market has caused a severe reduction in  
24 revenues that threatens vital services for the poor, including  
25 subsidized child care; and

26 WHEREAS, California's unemployment rate is at 6.4 percent,  
27 making it even more difficult for workers eligible for TANF  
28 benefits to obtain more gainful employment in the near future; and

29 WHEREAS, Studies of welfare "leavers" show that leaving  
30 welfare usually does not mean living in self-sufficiency; and

31 WHEREAS, The TANF block grant, as enacted in 1996,  
32 expired on September 30, 2002, but has been temporarily extended  
33 by Congress until March 31, 2003; and

34 WHEREAS, Congress is now considering reauthorization of  
35 the TANF block grant as well as the level of, and rules governing,  
36 federal funding; now, therefore, be it

37 *Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California,*  
38 *jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California recognizes  
39 California's pending economic crisis and that reductions in TANF

1 funding will further exacerbate economic hardships to working  
2 families; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the Legislature of the State of California  
4 recognizes that retention of time limits on TANF assistance to  
5 needy families will not only worsen California's economy, but the  
6 economies of other states as well; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the Legislature of the State of California urges  
8 the Congress of the United States to do all of the following:

9 (1) Increase TANF block grant funding to states that, like  
10 California, are facing severe shortfalls in their ability to adequately  
11 fund services and benefits for low-income families.

12 ~~(2) At a minimum, until January 1, 2005, allow states to use~~  
13 ~~TANF funds for eligible~~

14 (2) *Allow states to use TANF funds to provide an additional 24*  
15 *months of TANF eligibility for families who have used 60 months*  
16 *of TANF eligibility.*

17 (3) Consider "stopping the clock" on TANF assistance for  
18 recipients who are meeting work participation requirements or  
19 who live in counties with high unemployment rates; and be it  
20 further

21 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
22 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
23 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
24 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
25 Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
26 States.

